



PGA
Employment Services™

CAREER NOTES
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Exploring New Career Opportunities

It's no secret that the recent economic downturn has impacted every sector of business, and the golf industry is no exception. Many golf facilities have been affected by a decline in rounds, revenues, and memberships and have been forced to re-evaluate the way they do business and staff their operations. While PGA member unemployment rates continue to remain well below the overall national average, there are certainly some PGA members who have been victims of the economy. Many of these PGA members are among our most experienced and successful professionals and have seen their position eliminated, or in some cases filled by a less experienced candidate at a lower compensation level.

In counseling and working with these PGA members on moving forward with their job search, three things have been apparent. First, most of these professionals have been successful in everything they have done throughout their career, including a track record of upward career progression and always being able to land a good job. Second, most have been focused on a traditional golf operations role for their entire career – Head Professional, Director of Golf, Teaching Professional, etc., and have not given much thought to other type of work in the golf industry. And third, many of them are learning about the challenges of finding employment at age 50 and beyond in today's environment.

Understandably, the majority of PGA members in this situation continue to seek a new position in golf operations management, where they are the most comfortable. However, the good news is that PGA members also have the opportunity to explore a number of alternative golf industry career paths that allow them to continue their PGA membership and their connection to the game. While it may not be their "dream" job, some PGA members actually find that they enjoy many aspects of a change in career direction – a new challenge, more normal work hours, a fresh lifestyle, and a chance to be involved with a different part of the golf industry.

Some of the alternative career options available to PGA members include:

- General Manager
- Corporate/multi-facility golf manager
- Golf association administrator/manager
- Tournament administrator/Rules official
- Golf retail store manager
- Golf sales representative
- College golf coach
- PGM administrator/faculty
- Club fitting/repair specialist

If you are thinking about exploring a different career direction in golf, a first step would be to ask yourself the following questions:

- What do I enjoy doing? What are my interests? What am I good at?
- What skills and experience do I have that would make me a good candidate for a different job?
- What compensation level will work with my current financial situation?
- Am I open to relocating for the right opportunity?
- Am I willing to start in an entry level position to gain experience in a new field?

Then seek advice and gather pertinent information from established individuals who are working in your targeted area. What is the job is like? What are the pros and cons? What are the short and long term job prospects? What experience and skills are employers looking for? Will I need any additional education or training? What compensation levels can I expect? Who are the key contacts? How do I get my foot in the door?

In addition, you will need to find out how these employers advertise opportunities and fill positions. While some use PGA employment services such as CareerLinks and PGA Jobfinder, others may utilize other methods of recruiting – company websites, industry networking, professional recruiters, non-golf Internet job boards, etc.

Also, to demonstrate that you are a viable candidate for a new career direction, you may need to modify your “golf operations” resume into a format that highlights your skills and qualifications that are relevant for the new position. Many of the skills and job functions of being a traditional golf professional can transfer and are highly sought after by employers for other positions as well – customer service, leadership, communication, organization, business management, personnel supervision, sales, marketing, financial and budget management, project development, computer skills, etc. Provide specific examples of your accomplishments in applicable areas and use terminology that is common to the field of work you are pursuing.

Regardless of your current employment status, it’s always a good idea to continually assess your career goals, keeping an eye on the future while doing your research, improving your skills, and networking with the right people. When the right opportunity becomes available, you’ll be ready.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you would like assistance with any career and employment matters.

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